

Remarks/Arguments

Reconsideration of this application is requested.

Claim Status

Claims 1-19 were presented. Claims 1, 3, 4, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 18 and 19 are amended, and claims 2 and 12 are canceled, without prejudice. Thus, claims 1, 3-11 and 13-19 are now pending.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 3, 5, 7-10, 13, 15 and 17-19 are indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claim 3 is rewritten to include the limitations of base claim 1 and intervening claim 2. Claims 8 and 9 are rewritten to include the limitations of base claim 1, from which each directly depends. Claim 10 depends from claim 9. Claim 13 is rewritten to include all limitations of base claim 11 and intervening claim 12. Claims 18 and 19 are rewritten to include the limitations of base claim 11, from which each directly depends. Thus, claims 3, 8-10, 13, 18 and 19 are now in allowable form.

Claim Rejections

Claims 1, 2, 4, 6, 11, 12, 14 and 16 are rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as anticipated by Gibb (US 6,491,056). In response, independent claims 1 and 11 are amended to clearly distinguish over Gibb. In particular, claims 1 and 11 now recite:

wherein the small flow rate controlling valve element is a rod-shaped valve element formed so as to extend in a driving direction of the valve element,

wherein a front end portion of the rod-shaped valve element in the driving direction of the valve element is fixed to the large flow rate controlling valve element with a diameter larger than that of the valve hole of the sealing member,

wherein the sealing member is mounted to the rod-shaped valve element so as to be capable of forming a small flow rate state through a space between an outer face of the rod-shaped valve element and an inner face of the valve

hole of the sealing member and a subsequent space between the sealing member and the large flow rate controlling valve element, and

wherein the space between the outer face of the rod-shaped valve element and the inner face of the valve hole of the sealing member is closed according to a further movement of the rod-shaped valve element in the driving direction of the valve element

In view of these amendments, claims 2 and 12 are canceled, without prejudice, and claims 4 and 14 are amended as appropriate to eliminate duplicative subject matter.

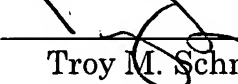
Since each and every limitation of claims 1 and 11, as amended, and claims 4-7 and 14-17 dependent thereon, is not disclosed by Gibb, these claims cannot be anticipated by Gibb. The rejections under 35 USC 102(b) should be withdrawn.

Conclusion

This application is now in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned to resolve any issues that remain after entry of this amendment. Any fees due with this response, including the fees for extra independent claims, may be charged to our Deposit Account No. 50-1314.

Respectfully submitted,
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